

BOSWORTH

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## The Doctor in Old New York

By

J. H. Bosworth, M.D.



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BOSWORTH

Half Moon Series

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VOLUME II. NUMBER VIII.

THE DOCTOR IN OLD NEW YORK.

By F. H. BOSWORTH, M.D.

NEW YORK had its beginnings in the early part of the seventeenth century, and the first doctor who made his appearance on Manhattan Island was a seventeenth-century doctor. The world at this time, as we know, had not fully emerged from that long era of darkness which we call the Middle Ages. While the arts, letters, and the amenities and luxuries of life had developed in a remarkable way, science can scarcely be said to have made any progress; and the doctor, if we are to regard his calling as a science, still followed the traditions which had been handed down from remote ages.

We can perhaps best understand the status of medicine at this period when we recall the fact that the works of Hippocrates, who lived in the second century before Christ, and those of Galen, who lived in the fifth century of the Christian era, were still the standard authori-

The  
Seventeenth  
Century  
Doctor



280	The Doctor in Old New York
The Seven- teenth Century Doctor	<p>ties on physic for the practitioner of the seventeenth century. This condition of things seems most curious to us in the present progressive age, when the teachings of twenty or thirty years ago are so often set aside as obsolete. The doctor's conception of disease processes, and of the action of remedies, was a confused and shadowy theory of humors, sympathetics, and antagonistics. As Culpepper, one of the standard authorities of the day, writing in 1657, says: "The whole ground of physic is comprehended in these two words, sympathy and antipathy. The one cures by strengthening the parts of the body afflicted, the other by resisting the malady afflicting."</p> <p>The seventeenth-century doctor affords a curious and interesting study both in his personality and his practice. His armamentarium consisted of certain simples and compounds, together with a few mineral remedies. These were made up into unguents, plasters, liniments, pills, boluses, and decoctions, while his herbs required to be gathered in certain phases of the moon or conjunctions of the planets. Above all, however, his lancet was his main reliance, and he seems to have used it on all occasions, and oftentimes continuously and most vigorously. Of this we have a quaint and striking illustration in the letter of the good Deacon and Doctor Fuller of Plymouth, who, writing to Governor Bradford,</p>

on June 28, 1630, says: "I have been to Matapan (Dorchester) at the request of Mr. Warham, and let some twenty of these people's blood. I had conference of them till I was weary."

Sir  
Theodore  
Mayerne

Of the doctor, as met with in the early days of New Amsterdam, we have but brief and fragmentary records. Perhaps we can form some estimate of him by a brief glance at his English confrère of the day. At this time the most prominent medical man of London was Sir Theodore Mayerne, physician to Henry IV. and Louis XIII. of France, and James I. and Charles I. of England. He was probably the most eminent physician of his time in Europe, and was a somewhat extensive writer on medical topics. With a shrewdness which has found many imitators, even in our own time among fashionable physicians, he made a specialty of the treatment of gout. Dr. Mayerne, however, recommended a most clumsy and inordinate administration of violent drugs. Calomel and sugar of lead, as well as pulverized human bones, were among his favorite remedies. The principal ingredient in his famous gout-powder was raspings of a human skull unburied. But his sweetest compound, as Jeaffreson tells us, was his Balsam of Bats, strongly recommended as an unguent for hypochondriacal persons, into which entered adders, bats, sucking whelps, earth-worms,

282	The Doctor in Old New York
Sir Kenelm Digby	<p>and the marrow of the thigh-bone of an ox.</p> <p>Another distinguished doctor of this period also was Sir Thomas Brown, the erudite and famous author of <i>Religio Medici</i>. Another was the “eccentric, gallant, brave, credulous, persevering, frivolous” Sir Kenelm Digby, courtier, cook, lover, warrior, political intriguer, and finally doctor. By means of his famous sympathetic powder some of the most marvellous cures in the history of medicine were accomplished. Curiously enough, the composition of this powder was revealed after the Doctor’s death, by his chemist, and consisted merely of sulphate of lime which was obtained by a rather unusual but unnecessarily complicated process. Among others of this time were William Harvey, who, unlike those we have mentioned, left to the world a bequest of incalculable value in his great discovery of the circulation of the blood, and Sydenham, one of the first to make available to his own and subsequent generations the value of intelligent clinical observation.</p> <p>We refer casually to these gentlemen as throwing a certain light on the seventeenth-century doctor whose advent on Manhattan Island is the subject of the present paper. For while none of them, with the exception of Sydenham and Harvey, made any permanent contribution to the world’s progress, their</p>



<p>The Doctor in Old New York</p>	<p>283</p>
<p>personality and practice afford us an interesting subject for study. They certainly did not treat disease with any intelligent conception of the pathological process they intended to counteract, or of the true action of drugs ; yet they undoubtedly thought they cured disease. Was it by their practice or their personality ? Something of the practice we have seen. Their personality was a curious picture.</p> <p>On the continent at this time the doctor was decked out in long black gown and skull-cap, a modification of the robe of his priestly predecessor. There seems to have been an evident attempt to make himself impressive and decorative. His gold-headed cane was absolutely essential, and we have, preserved in the College of Physicians in London, to this day, the cane carried successively by Radcliff, Mead, Askin, Pitcairn, and Bailey. His wig was adorned with two and even three tails, and so elaborately dressed that he often went bareheaded through the streets of London lest it should become disordered. His silk coat and stockings and silver buckles appear to have been essential parts of his dress, and even a muff to preserve the softness and delicacy of the hands was carried by many. Up to the days of Charles II. he made his visits on horseback, riding sideways after the fashion of women, but after that time he rode in</p>	<p>Costume of the Seven= teenth Century Doctor</p>

284	The Doctor in Old New York
Com= forters of the Sick	<p>his coach, drawn by two, and sometimes four and even six horses. This, then, is the prototype of the physician who, compelled by the stress of home surroundings to emigrate, or led by the hope of gain, made his advent on Manhattan Island in the early beginnings of New York.</p> <p>Although the West India Company's directors in their original charter enjoined upon the colonists to find ways and means whereby they could support the minister and schoolmaster to attend to the mental and spiritual needs of the people, they seem to have been content in ministering to the physical ailments with directing that comforters of the sick (<i>Zieckentroosters</i>) be appointed. I trust that this was not a reflection on the medical men of the day, although one can easily understand how a comforter of the sick might under some circumstances be a safer attendant than the seventeenth-century doctor, to whom we have before referred. We find recorded as officially serving in the capacity of <i>Zieckentroosters</i> and receiving pay from the Company under the first Governor, Eva Pietersen Evertsen and one Molenaer.</p> <p>After the great commercial value and promise of the settlement of the New Netherlands had been recognized, and the Dutch West India Company was organized for establishing a post here and carrying on trade, it is probable</p>

that in each ship's company a barber-surgeon was included, who was competent to bleed and perform minor operations, for we find that Harman Mynderts Van den Bogaerdet visited the province in 1631, as surgeon to the ship *Eendraght*, while in 1633 William Deering, surgeon to the ship *William* of London, visited the island. These good gentlemen seem to have been birds of passage who left no abiding record on the pages of history, and it is not until twenty-eight years after Hudson's discovery, and fourteen years after the arrival of the good ship *New Netherlands*, sent out by the Dutch West India Company, that we find the record of a regularly educated medical man making his appearance in the settlement. Previous to this, however, midwives seem to have been established in the colony in an official character, for we find Lysbert Dircksen, wife of Barent Dircksen, was the town midwife of New Amsterdam in 1638, and that a house was erected for her at the public expense by the direction of Governor Van Twiller. In 1644, Tryntje Jonas, the mother of Annetje Jansz, was the midwife of the town. She died in 1646, and the daughter had some difficulty in collecting from the West India Company certain monies due for the mother's services to the colony. In 1655, Hellegond Joris was appointed midwife to the town, and in 1660, the Council voted her

Official  
Mid=  
wives



286	The Doctor in Old New York
Dr. Johannes La Montagne	<p>a salary of one hundred guilders a year for attending the poor.</p> <p>The first educated medical man who made his appearance in New Amsterdam was Dr. Johannes La Montagne, a learned Huguenot gentleman, who arrived in the spring of 1637. He was born in 1595, and received his degree from the University at Leyden, where he married his first wife, Rachel De Forest. After practising in Leyden a number of years, he determined to follow his wife's family, who had previously emigrated to America. He is styled "<i>een wel gestudient man</i>" and his reputation as a physician immediately gave him a certain prominence in the village. His first wife dying a few years after his arrival, he married again, in 1647, Agritha Fillis, widow of Arent Corson. By the latter he had no family. By the first wife he had five children, of whom his daughter Rachel married Dr. Gysbert Van Lintoch. Dr. La Montagne's ability was early recognized by Governor Kieft, who appointed him to a seat in his Council in 1638, a position he retained under Governor Stuyvesant. Again, when the Council voted that a public school should be established, if practicable, in the City Tavern, La Montagne was for the time appointed schoolmaster. He is said once to have saved Governor Kieft from assassination. At one time he was sent with an expedition of fifty men to defend Fort</p>

New Hope (New London) against the Massachusetts colonists. At the time of the English occupation he was in command of Fort Orange as Vice-Director and surrendered the fort to the newcomers. La Montagne held, moreover, at different times various positions of trust, in which he seems always to have acquitted himself with credit. It is believed that he accompanied Governor Stuyvesant on his return to Holland in 1665, and that he died there in 1670.

On March 28, 1638, there arrived the third Governor of the Colony, William Kieft. He was accompanied by two surgeons, who apparently came in an official capacity: Gerrit Schult and Hans Kierstede. Of Schult we have no further record; but Kierstede, who came from Magdeburg, Saxony, seems to have settled down to practise his profession in the colony permanently. He is described in the old records as "surgeon," and received various grants of land on the Strand, now Pearl Street, from the Company, in 1647, 1653, and 1656. In 1642, he married Sarah Roelofs, the daughter of the famous midwife, Annetje Jansz, by whom he had ten children. In one of the letters from the Director in Holland he is spoken of as having served the Company "long and faithfully." He died in 1666. Henry T. Kierstede, who kept the drug store on Broadway

Hans  
Kierstede

288	The Doctor in Old New York
Dr. Peter Van der Linde	<p>near its junction with Seventh Avenue, some thirty years ago, was the great-great-grandson of Surgeon Hans, and sold a famous unguent, Kierstede's ointment, which was said to have been made after a formula of his ancestor.</p> <p>In the same year, 1638, Dr. Peter Van der Linde came over in the ship <i>Lore</i>, accompanied by his wife, Elsje. His wife dying, he married, in 1644, Martha, the widow of Jan Menje. In 1640 he appears in the records as inspector of tobacco, and in 1648, as school-master and clerk of the church. He seems to have been harshly treated by Stuyvesant, and left the colony. Apparently the colonists had not learned the art of specializing in occupations, and professional men, as well as others, had to take their turn at whatever opportunity suggested or necessity compelled, as in the case of Roelofsen who added to the slender salary of a school-teacher the probably larger emoluments which accrued from taking in washing.</p> <p>The Indian War of 1643, so rashly brought on by Governor Kieft, necessitated the bringing to the colony from Curaçoa a company of soldiers, and with them came Surgeon Paulus Van der Beeck. At the close of the war he married the Widow Bennet, who owned a farm of nine hundred and thirty acres in Gowanus. The farm had been devastated and</p>



the house burned. The site was about what is now the corner of Third Avenue and Twenty-eighth Street, Brooklyn, and there the newly married couple rebuilt the house and reclaimed the farm. Van der Beeck, dividing his time between farming and the practice of his profession, thus became the first medical man of Brooklyn. He seems to have been a man of enterprise, acting also in later years as tithe-collector and ferry-master. He was at one time severely reprimanded by the Council for keeping would-be passengers waiting "half the day and night before he would carry them across the river." He seems to have prospered and grown rich, for in 1675 he was assessed "two polls, two horses, four cows, three ditto of three years, one ditto of one year, and twenty morgens of land of the value of £133, 10 s."

Surgeon  
Paulus  
Van der  
Beeck

In 1647, William Hayes and Peter Brucht are recorded as having practised in the colony, and between 1649 and 1652 we find notices of John Can, Jacob Mollenaer, Isaac Jansen, and Jacob Hendrichsen Varvanger. The former of these were probably ship surgeons who practised upon the colonists while their vessels were detained in the harbor. The latter seems to have settled here permanently, and is one of three men whom we find recorded as regularly established physicians in 1658, the other two being Hans Kierstede

290	The Doctor in Old New York
Dr. Abram Staats	<p>and one L'Orange. Dr. Jacob Hendrichsen Varvanger came over to New Amsterdam in 1646, and served the Company faithfully until the English occupation, when he took the oath of allegiance. In 1654, we find him petitioning the Director-General and Council for payment "for the use of his medicament," which he had been importing from Holland at his own expense for several years. He was promptly paid and his salary increased. In 1674 his property was valued at 8000 florins.</p> <p>Among the physicians who landed in New York and settled in the outlying colonies was Dr. Abram Staats, who came from Holland in 1642, and settled at Fort Orange, immediately taking a somewhat prominent position in the colony, for he became a member of the Council and aided in making an important treaty with the Indians. His house at Claverack was burned by the savages and his wife and two sons perished in it. He was a large fur trader and for many years commanded a sloop plying between Albany and New Amsterdam. He had a son, Samuel Staats, who was born in the village of New Amsterdam and was subsequently sent to Holland for an education, returning to practise his profession in New York, where he arose to a considerable degree of eminence, dying in 1715. Another son, Jacob, was a surgeon in Albany.</p> <p>Another physician at Fort Orange was Jacob</p>

D'Hinnse, who appears to have made a considerable reputation as a teacher of medicine. A number of medical students from the various settlements studied with him. The records of a lawsuit are still extant at Albany between the doctor and a patient, one Thos. Powell. The doctor sues for his fees. The plaintiff pleads the existence of a contract for yearly attendance at two beavers (\$6.40) per annum. The doctor responds that the contract was for medical attendance alone, not for surgical treatment. The case was not decided.

In 1660, Jacob De Commer is said to have been the leading surgeon of New Amsterdam, but later he removed to one of the outlying colonies, New Amsdel (Newcastle), Delaware, and in 1661, Dr. J. Hughes practised his profession in the city. Between 1658 and 1680 we find recorded the names of Doctors Peter Johnson Vandenburg, Cornelius Van Dyke, Henry Taylor, and Herman Wessels, together with Samuel Megapolensis. This latter was a son of the Rev. Johannes Megapolensis, who came to New Amsterdam in 1642. He was sent to Harvard College in 1657, and afterwards to the University of Utrecht where he graduated in theology and also received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. On his return to this country he was appointed pastor of the church but continued to practise medicine also during his life. He was one of the Dutch

Samuel  
Megapo=  
lensis



292	The Doctor in Old New York
Giles Gaudineau	<p>Commissioners to negotiate terms of capitulation with the English in 1664. Among other professional men of whom we have brief record as connected with the Colony at this period were Girardus Beekman, Michael de Marco Church, and Giles Gaudineau. Beekman was a son of William Beekman, who was a member of Governor Leisler's Council. After the overthrow and execution of Leisler, Beekman was tried for treason, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged. He was subsequently pardoned and filled a number of prominent positions in the councils of different governors. Gaudineau, who signed himself <i>chirurgo-physician</i>, was a Huguenot and a man of considerable ability. He became a citizen of New York in 1686, and took an active part in the affairs of the settlement. He was from Sigournay in Low Poictou, and had two daughters, Suzanne and Helene. Suzanne returned to France, but Helene remained in America and was married, October 18, 1702, to Jacques DesBrosses. Gaudineau was a lieutenant under Dongan in the war against the French and Indians, and in 1708 was a vestryman of Trinity Church.</p> <p>At the time of the Dutch surrender, Johannes Kerfbyle, a Hollander and a graduate of Leyden University, came to the Colony, where he arose to a considerable eminence as a practitioner of medicine. In 1691, he performed</p>

what was probably the first *post-mortem* examination made in America, when under the direction of the authorities he made an autopsy on the body of Governor Slaughter, whose sudden death it was suspected had been due to the administration of poison.

During Governor Kieft's administration a moderate immigration seems to have set in, and the village was filling with people not in the employ of the Company ; hence the question arose in the minds of the Directors, whether they should still maintain a surgeon at their own expense, or allow all those who wished, to practise their profession independently. As we have already seen, medical practice at this day was not restricted by diplomas and licenses, but, to a certain extent, every one deemed himself competent to practise along certain lines, and large numbers were accustomed to avail themselves of the privilege. Three such practitioners were well known to have made pills and sold Vienna drinks, *i. e.*, a concoction of rhubarb, senna, and port wine, to the people of New Amsterdam in 1652. Pieter Le Feber, a French Huguenot, petitioned the Council in 1653 for permission to sell certain waters prepared by him for medicinal uses. The desired permission was given, but the Council were in doubt as to the legality of their action under the laws of the Company, since brewers and wholesale

Un=  
licensed  
Prac=  
titioners

294	The Doctor in Old New York
Barber-Surgeons	<p>dealers, including distillers, were not permitted to keep a tavern, or sell beer or wine at retail. Le Feber seems to have discoursed so eloquently before the Directors of the many virtues of his decoction, that an exception was made in his favor on humane grounds, and he was permitted to sell his marvellous water at both wholesale and retail.</p> <p>We have seen that one of the doctors of the early colony called himself a chirurgo-physician. This was an irregular title, for the doctor of the seventeenth century was either a surgeon (contracted into surgeon at the beginning of the eighteenth century), physician, or barber-surgeon, the designation of doctor not coming into use in America until about 1769. This association of the surgical and tonsorial art seems very curious to one living in the nineteenth century, but it arose in a very simple and natural way. Physicians have been known in history from the earliest recorded times. A surgeon (from the Greek words, <i>χείρ</i>, hand, and <i>ἔργον</i>, work) seems to have been at first merely an assistant of the physician, performing for him various minor duties. This condition existed through the days of Greek and Roman civilization, but during the Dark Ages the practice of medicine in Europe fell almost entirely into clerical hands, and the duties of both physician and surgeon were performed by the priesthood. Certain abuses</p>



crept in which led the ecclesiastical authorities to interfere and forbid the clergy from practising outside their monasteries. And again, as we find recorded in various Councils of the Church during the ninth and tenth centuries, the shedding of blood by the clergy, as in surgical operations, was absolutely interdicted. In order to retain their practice they were in the habit of sending out their barbers to perform blood-letting and other of the minor operations in surgery. By that time the shaven priesthood had come into being, and the barber was an *attaché* of every monastic institution. As we can readily see, these monastery barbers very soon began to practise independently. As they grew in number and strength they became incorporated into special crafts, that of the barber-surgeons of England being regularly chartered in the fourteenth century. This institution became one of the wealthy corporations of London, and flourished for four centuries, and it was not until 1745 that it became separated into two crafts, that of the barbers on the one hand, and the surgeons on the other. Of course, there resulted from the condition of things during this period a bitter and persistent rivalry between the barber-surgeons and the chirurgions. This spirit of rivalry was early manifested in New Amsterdam, where we find that the surgeons of the colony seemed to consider themselves entitled

**Barber=  
Surgeons**

296	The Doctor in Old New York
First Medical Ordinance	<p>to the exclusive right to practise on shore. But it also seems evident that they desired to include in this practice the art of shaving, while the barbers of ships visiting in these waters claimed also the right to practise on shore while their ships were lying in harbor. It appears that the ships' barbers had committed a number of mistakes in treatment while on shore, although there was no reflection cast on their proficiency with the razor. Hence, as a result of this, the surgeons of the colony sent a petition to the Directors, asking them to forbid these intruders from shaving people on shore. The action of the Directors in this matter is the first ordinance, I believe, ever passed to regulate the practice of medicine in New York. It is a curious document, and I copy it in full, as embodied in the Dutch Records of the island, February 2, 1652 :</p> <p>“ On the petition of the Chirurgeons of New Amsterdam, that none but they alone be allowed to shave, the Director and Council understand that shaving doth not appertain exclusively to chirurgery, but is an appendix thereto ; that no man can be prevented operating on himself nor to do another the friendly act, provided it is through courtesy and not for gain, which is hereby forbidden. It is further ordered that ship barbers shall not be allowed to dress any wounds nor administer any potions on shore without the previous knowledge and special consent of the petitioners, or at least of Dr. Montagne.”</p> <p>During the latter years of Stuyvesant's incumbency, the Company's surgeon was the</p>

before-mentioned Master Jacob Hendrichsen Varvanger. He was a man of somewhat broader humanity than his fellows, and conscientious in the performance of his duty. He was in the employ of the Company for a number of years and seems to have become considerably exercised over the fact that the soldiers and other employees of the Company, when sick, could not have that care and attendance which was necessary to a proper treatment of their diseases. He says in a report to the Director and Council, December 12, 1658,—

The First  
Hospital

“ He is sorry to learn that such sick people must suffer much through cold, inconveniences, and the untidiness of the people who have taken the poor fellows into their houses where bad smells and filth counteract all health-producing effects of the medicaments given by him, the surgeon. Death has been the result of it in several cases and many deaths will follow.

“ He requests, therefore, that by order of the Director and Council a proper place may be arranged for the reception of such patients, to be taken care of by a faithful person, who is to assist them bodily with food and fire and allow soldiers to pay for it out of their wages and rations, Company’s negroes to be attended at Company’s expense or as thought most advisable.”

He was directed to look up such a place and person and report.

The first hospital on Manhattan Island, and probably the first hospital in North America, was thus established, and on the twentieth



298	The Doctor in Old New York
Dr. Varvanger	<p>day of December, 1758, Hilletje Wilbruch, the wife of Condil Tubias Wilbruch, was appointed its matron at a yearly salary of 100 florins. It became known as the Old Hospital. It was sold by the Governor, in 1680, for £200, after it had become unserviceable, and better buildings were supplied.</p> <p>The first coroner's inquest of which I find record in the Colony was held in February, 1658, by this same Master Varvanger, with his colleagues, Kierstede and Jacob N——. It seems that one Bruyn Barentsen had gotten into a brawl with Jacob Eldersen and had received a severe beating at his hands, of which, apparently, he subsequently died. Eldersen was acquitted, however, as they found that the beating had nothing to do with the death, for after receiving it Bruyn had been able to row across to Breuckelen.</p> <p>Some suggestion as to the social position of the doctor at this time is found in the enrolment of the citizens of New Amsterdam in 1657, when Dr. Varvanger's name is absent from the "Great Citizens," numbering twenty, but is found in the list of "Small Citizens," numbering 204.</p> <p>The first attempt on the part of the authorities to regulate the practice of medicine by official enactment we have noticed in the matter of the barber-surgeons in 1652. In 1657, we find an effort made to enroll the doctors</p>

or to compel them to do detective work. An ordinance passed by the Schout and Burgo-master and Scheppens gives notice to all chi-rurgeons of the city, that when they are called to dress a wound they shall ask the patient who wounded him, and that information be thereby given to the Schout. If these gentlemen were as jealous of their professional privileges as the doctor of the nineteenth century, they probably took a firm stand in this matter and declined to reveal professional secrets. These two enactments are the only ones which we find recorded as having been instituted under the Dutch régime. Immediately after the British took possession of the Colony, a curious law was promulgated by the Duke of York for the government of all the lands included within the Duke's patent, as follows :

The  
Duke of  
York's Or=  
dinance

“ That no person or persons whatever employed about the bodys of men, women, or children for the preservation of life or health as chirurgeons, midwives, physicians, or others, presume to put forth or exercise any act contrary to the known approved rule of art in each mystery or occupation, or exercise any force, violence, or cruelty upon or towards the body of any, whether young or old, without the advice and consent of such as are skilful in the same art (if such may be had) or at least of some of the wisest and gravest then present, and consent of the patient or patients if they be mentis compotes, much less contrary to such advice and consent, upon such severe punishment as the nature of the fact may deserve ; which law, nevertheless, is not intended to discourage any from all lawful use of their skill,

300	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Doctor in Old New York</b></p>
<p><b>Medical Fees</b></p>	<p>but rather to encourage and direct them in the right use thereof, and to inhibit and restrain the presumptuous arrogance of such as, through confidence of their own skill or any other sinister respects, dare boldly attempt to exercise any violence upon or towards the body of young or old, one or another, to the prejudice or hazard of the life or limb of man, woman or child."</p> <p>The fees collected by the doctors of this day were probably very small, and yet, undoubtedly, the laity were oftentimes subjected to extortion at the hands of quacks and ignorant pretenders, and while we have no legislative enactment recorded in the Dutch colony to counteract this, the following act, passed in the Colony of Virginia in 1645, is interesting, as bearing upon the point :</p> <p>"Whereas by the 9th act of Assembly, held the 21st of October, 1639, consideration being had and taken of the immoderate and excessive rates and prices enacted by practitioners in physick and chirurgery, and the complaints made to the then assembly of the bad consequence thereof, it so happening through the said intolerable exactions that the hearts of divers masters were hardened rather to suffer their servants to perish for want of fit means and applications than by seeking relief to fall into the hands of griping and avaricious men ; it be apprehended by such masters, who were more swayed by politick respects than Xian [Christian] duty or charity, that it was the more gainfull and saving way to stand to the hazard of their servants than to entertain the certain charge of physitian or chirurgeon, whose demands for the most parte exceed the purchase of the patient ; it was therefore enacted, for the better redress of the like abuses thereafter, untill some fitter course should be advised on, for the regulating physitians and chirurgeons within</p>



The Doctor in Old New York	301
<p>the Colony, that it should be lawful and free for any person or persons in such cases where they should conceive the acc't of the physitian or chirurgeon to be unreasonable, either for his pains or for his drugs or medicines, to arrest the said physitian or chirurgeon either to the quarter court or county court where they inhabitt, where the said physitian should declare upon oath the true value, worth and quantity of his drugs and medicines administered to or for the use of the plt. [patient] whereupon the court where the matter was tryed to adjudge, and allow to the said physitian or chirurgeon such satisfaction and reward as they in their discretions should think fitt.</p> <p>“ And it was further ordered that when it should be sufficiently proved in any of the said courts that a physitian or chirurgeon had neglected his patient, or that he had refused, being thereunto required, his helpe or assistance to any person or persons in sickness or extremity, that the said physitian or chirurgeon should be censured by the said court for such his neglect or refusal, which said act, and every clause therein mentioned and repeated, this present grand assembly to all intents and purposes doth revive, ratifie, allow and confirme, with this only exception that the plts. [or patients] shall have their remedy at the county courts respectively, unless in case of appeal.”</p> <p>And how much the fees were at this time may be judged from the fact that this same colony only a hundred years later passed an act making the highest fee for every visit or prescription in town, or within five miles, five shillings, and for every mile above five, sixpence. Curiously enough, it was further enacted that any person who had studied physic in the university, and had taken a degree therein, be allowed to charge double the above amounts.</p>	<p>Medical Fees</p>

**The First  
Burial-  
Ground**

The first burial-ground in New York was situated on the west side of Broadway, on the rise of ground above the Bowling Green, and not far north of the present Morris Street. This ancient churchyard had become very full in 1665. In 1656, Governor Stuyvesant had proposed to abandon it as a place of burial, and desired instead to tear down houses south of the fort, (the first was the plot bounded by Bowling Green, Whitehall Bridge, and State Street,) and make a burial-place there. The citizens suggested the establishment of a place on the hill west of the fort, near a windmill (part of the present Battery), which they described as a good hill, clear of timber. Nothing was done till 1665, when a new fence was put up, and the old graveyard, which had for some time prior lain quite open to the encroachment of animals along the streets, was enclosed.

“In 1676 or 1677 the old church yard was divided up into four lots each 25 x 100 and sold at auction, the new burial place being established near Trinity Church.”

As the colony grew in numbers and prosperity under the English administration we find at the beginning of the eighteenth century a flourishing village of five thousand inhabitants and its doctors becoming men of more liberal education and wider culture. It is unnecessary to enumerate all who practised here at this

time, but certain names stand out more prominently and are worthy of note. John Van Buren, a native of Buren, near Amsterdam, came to New York early in 1700, having studied under the celebrated Boerhave and taken his degree at Leyden University. He occupied a prominent position in the colony, and his son, Beekman Van Buren, who was born in 1727, succeeded him in his practice, becoming the progenitor of the large family of that name scattered throughout the United States. Another prominent physician of the day was Dr. Cadwallader Colden, who was born in Scotland, and graduated at the University of Edinburgh in 1705. Having studied medicine, he spent ten years in practice in Philadelphia, when he was appointed by Governor Hunter to the position of Surveyor-General of the New York Colony. He was not only an accomplished physician and writer, but also an eminent naturalist, his writings on botanical subjects showing a remarkable familiarity with this science. He moreover is said to have collected and described between three and four hundred new plants in America. He wrote a history of the Five Nations, besides various papers on medical subjects, and held the position of Lieutenant-Governor in 1761, and again in 1765. He died in 1766.

Dr. Isaac Du Bois, also a graduate of Leyden, practised here in the earlier part of the

Pro=  
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304	The Doctor in Old New York
Prominent Physicians	<p>century. He is notable, I think, in having contributed an excellent paper on the subject of blood-letting, in which he discoursed rather vigorously upon its abuse, as well as its use. Another practitioner of the day was Dr. John Nichol, who died in 1745, after having practised in this city for nearly half a century. He divided his duties to his patients with occupying a position on the Bench in Governor Leisler's time. Dr. John Dupuy, who died in 1745, at the age of twenty-eight, seems to have attained a somewhat enviable position in the Colony for so young a man, if we may believe the following notice outlined in <i>The Weekly Postboy</i> of that year: "Last night, Sunday, July 21st, died in the prime of life to the almost universal regret and sorrow of the City, Mr. John Dupuy, M.D., and man midwife, in which loss it may be truly said, as of Goliah's sword, 'there was none like unto him.'"</p> <p>Among others of this period were Frank Brinley, who was surgeon to the New York troops during the French and Indian War; Ebenezer Crosby, a surgeon in the Continental Army, who settled in the city after the close of the war and became a professor in Columbia College; and Charles McKnight, another surgeon in the Continental Army, who graduated from Princeton in 1761, and settled in the city after the close of the war,</p>

The Doctor in Old New York	305
<p>and also became a professor of anatomy. It is said that Dr. McKnight was the first physician who ever made use of a carriage in his round of visits to patients.</p> <p>Dr. John Bard, a native of New York, who was born in 1716, attained notable eminence in the profession in his day. He studied under Dr. Kearsley, a prominent English physician, and settled in New York in 1746. He practised his profession here for fifty-two years, and was the first president of the Medical Society of New York, which was organized in 1788. He was a warm personal friend of Benjamin Franklin, and in connection with Dr. Middleton, in 1750, performed the second dissection of a human cadaver recorded in America. His son, Dr. Samuel Bard, who was born in 1742, after graduating at the University of Edinburgh commenced the practice of medicine in this city in 1765. In 1769, Dr. Bard started the first agitation in favor of the erection of a public hospital, which was finally successful, and was also one of the professors and associated in organizing the first medical school in the city of New York in 1757. He was Washington's physician during the General's residence in this city.</p> <p>Richard Bailey practised in the city until his death in 1801. He published a number of interesting essays on yellow fever, which had devastated the city on so many different occa-</p>	<p><b>Dr. Samuel Bard</b></p>

Dr. John  
Jones

sions during the seventeenth century, and is said to have been one of the first physicians to make a specialty in this city of obstetrical practice. Dr. Nicholas Romaine, who was born in 1766 and died in 1817, was one of the presidents of the New York City Medical Society, and is said to have been a fine scholar and an active promoter of all educational measures. Dr. Samuel Colossy, an Irish physician who settled for a time in New York, has left a name behind him as one of the organizers of the first medical college in the city, in which he held the chair of Professor of Anatomy. Another of the professors of this college was Peter Middleton, a Scotch physician, already referred to as having assisted Dr. Bard in his dissection.

In looking over the brief records of the eighteenth-century doctors of New York, I find no one who has inspired in me a warmer personal interest and admiration than Dr. John Jones, the son of Dr. Evan Jones. His father and grandfather were physicians before him. He studied medicine with Dr. Cadwallader Colden, of Philadelphia, and subsequently went to London and from thence to France, where he obtained the degree of doctor of medicine from the University of Rheims, and still later studied at the Universities of Leyden and of Edinburgh. On returning to New York he was made a professor of surgery in the Col-



lege of New York. His life seems to have been an extraordinarily busy one. He built up a large practice, which necessarily occupied much of his time, and yet he was a large contributor to medical as well as general literature, and was a busy lecturer and clinical demonstrator. He became a warm personal friend of both Washington and Franklin. He died at the age of sixty-two. An event in the early part of his career is interesting as throwing a certain light on the times in which he lived, as well as showing the essential dignity of his character. Some of the physicians entered into a compact to distinguish themselves from the rest of their fellow-citizens by a particular mode of wearing their hair. Among the rest, it was proposed to Dr. Jones, who indignantly and very properly declined to enter into any such arrangement, declaring that he considered that and every similar means to impose upon the weakness or credulity of others, as unworthy the members of a liberal profession, and as intended to enforce that attention and respect which their own conduct and abilities should always command. While the other doctors in the town, therefore, were strutting about in the new-fashioned bob, Dr. Jones could not be distinguished from any well-bred gentleman of any other profession. Of course an attempt was made to boycott Dr. Jones by a plan not altogether unfamiliar to

Dr. John  
Jones

308	The Doctor in Old New York
Medical Ordinance of 1760	<p>physicians now living, namely by refusing to consult with him. The result was as might have been expected: on the first occasion in which this plan was brought into practice the physician who refused to consult with Dr. Jones was promptly dismissed, and Dr. Jones installed in his place.</p> <p>This brief review of the New York doctor of this day, I think, gives us a fair estimate of his personality, abilities, and practice. But we have referred only to the regular practitioner. That the country was overrun by ignorant pretenders, we have ample evidence by the numerous diatribes against them in the secular press. One writer, speaking of this condition, tells us that “quacks abound like locusts in Egypt.” But these arise in all communities and possess no especial points of interest in this connection, except that their existence led to legal enactment for their suppression, for with the exception of the Duke of York ordinance of 1664 (already quoted), no attempt was made to protect the community from these irregular practitioners until 1760, when the following law was passed:</p> <p>“An Act to regulate the practice of Physick &amp; Surgery in the City of New York, June 10, 1760.</p> <p>“Whereas many ignorant and unskilful Persons in Physick and Surgery in order to gain a Subsistence do take upon themselves to administer Physick and practice Surgery in the City of New York to the endangering of the Lives &amp; Limbs of their Patients; and many poor &amp; ignorant persons</p>

inhabiting the said City who have been persuaded to become their Patients have been great sufferers thereby ; For preventing such abuses for the future,

“ Be it Enacted by his Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, & the General Assembly, and it is hereby Enacted by the Authority of the same, That from & after the Publication of this Act, no Person whatsoever shall practice as a Physician or surgeon in the said City of New York before he shall first have been examined in Physick or Surgery and approved of and admitted by one of His Majesty’s Council, the Judges of the Supreme Court, the King’s Attorney General and the Mayor of the City of New York for the time being, or by any three or more of them, taking to their assistance for such Examination such proper person or persons as they in their discretion shall think fit. And if any Candidate after due Examination of his learning and Skill in Physick or Surgery as aforesaid shall be approved and admitted to practice as a Physician or Surgeon, or both, the said Examiners, or any three or more of them, shall give under their Hands and Seals to the Person so admitted as aforesaid, a Testimonial of his Examination & Admission in the form following, to wit—

*“ To All To Whom These Presents Shall Come Or May Concern Know Ye*

“ That We whose names are hereunto subscribed in pursuance of An Act of the Lieutenant Governor, the Council and the General Assembly, made and published at New York the — day of — in the year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and — Entitled AN ACT to regulate the Practice of Physick & Surgery in the City of New York, have duely Examined — of — Physician [or] Surgeon [or] Physician and Surgeon [as the case may be] and having approved of his Skill have admitted him as a Physician [or] Surgeon [or] Physician and Surgeon, to practice in the said Faculty [or] Faculties throughout this province of New York. IN TESTIMONY whereof we have subscribed our Names and affixed our Seals to the Instrument at New

Medical  
Ordinance  
of 1760



310	The Doctor in Old New York																				
Medical Ordinance of 1760	<p>York this —— day of —— Anno Domini One Thousand ——.</p> <p>“AND be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid that if any Person shall practice in the City of New York as a Physician or Surgeon or both as Physician and Surgeon without such testimonial as aforesaid he shall for every such offence forfeit the sum of five pounds, One half thereof to the use of the Person or Persons who shall sue for the same, and the other Moiety to the Church Wardens and Vestrymen of the said City for the use of the Poor thereof, the said Forfeiture to be recovered with costs before the Mayor, Recorder or any one of the Aldermen of the said City who are hereby empowered in a summary way to hear try and determine any suit brought for such forfeiture, and to give Judgment and to award Execution thereupon.</p> <p>PROVIDED that this Act shall not extend to any Person or Persons administering Physick or Practicing Surgery within the said City before the Publication hereof; Or to any Person bearing His Majesty's Commission and employed in His Service as a Physician or Surgeon.”</p> <p>The fees of the doctor in the eighteenth century do not appear to have increased proportionately to the growth of the town, if we may judge from the following account rendered by Dr. William Laurence in the latter part of the century:</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>£</td><td>s.</td><td>d.</td></tr><tr><td>To inoculating a child</td><td>2</td><td>8</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>To a visit and a Calomel bolus</td><td></td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>To a bottle of Black Water</td><td></td><td>16</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>To a visit, sewing up ye boy's lip and to sundry dressings in the cure of it</td><td></td><td>10</td><td></td></tr></table>		£	s.	d.	To inoculating a child	2	8		To a visit and a Calomel bolus		4		To a bottle of Black Water		16		To a visit, sewing up ye boy's lip and to sundry dressings in the cure of it		10	
	£	s.	d.																		
To inoculating a child	2	8																			
To a visit and a Calomel bolus		4																			
To a bottle of Black Water		16																			
To a visit, sewing up ye boy's lip and to sundry dressings in the cure of it		10																			

	£	s.	d.
To rising in the night, a visit and } dose of Calomel ye child	1	12	
To five visits dressing gave ye } head and bleeding	1	4	
To a puke		1	
To drawing a tooth		4	

Physi-  
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the Eight-  
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Century

A writer in the *Independent Reflector* in 1753, referring to New York, says: “That place boasts the honor of above 40 gentlemen of the faculty, and far the greater number of them are mere pretenders to a profession of which they are entirely ignorant.” That this latter statement is a grossly unjust charge, I need not affirm, for while one cannot always regard the seventeenth-century doctor as seriously as he seems to have taken himself, we find in his successor of the eighteenth century a broader culture, a deeper appreciation of the essential dignity of his calling, and a far better preparation and equipment for his duties. When we remember that at the end of the second third of the eighteenth century New York was a somewhat rude little town of about twenty thousand inhabitants, we cannot but accord respect to the doctors of the period, and admiration for the great foresight and broad-minded humanity which characterized the enterprises inaugurated by them for the public good.

We have already spoken of Dr. Bard. In

312	The Doctor in Old New York
<p>Organ- ization of Medical College in 1768</p>	<p>1768, there was organized in connection with King's College, now Columbia College, the second medical college in the New World, the first having been organized in Philadelphia in 1765. It arose apparently by a voluntary combination on the part of a number of gentlemen who had already been engaged in giving private instruction. Its faculty consisted of Drs. Middleton, on the Theory of Physic, Colossy on Anatomy, Bard on the Practice of Physic, James Smith on Chemistry and Materia Medica, J. V. B. Tennant on Midwifery, and J. Jones, Professor of Surgery. In 1769, Columbia College had conferred the degree of Bachelor of Medicine upon Samuel Kissam and Robert Tucker, but in 1770 the first degree of Doctor of Medicine conferred in New York was given to Kissam, while Tucker received his Doctor's degree in the following May. These were the first medical degrees ever conferred in America, antedating by a few weeks only those which were given at Philadelphia. On the delivering of Kissam's and Tucker's degrees in 1769, Doctor Samuel Bard made a popular address, in which he advocated the utility and necessity of a public infirmary. So "warmly and pathetically," as Dr. Middleton tells us, was the need set forth, that a subscription was immediately started, headed by Sir Henry Moore, then Governor of the Province, and the sum of £800 sterling</p>



was collected for the furtherance of this purpose, £300 being added by the corporation of the city.

Estab=  
lishment  
of the  
New York  
Hospital

The establishment of the New York Hospital was thus assured and its corner-stone was accordingly laid, on July 27, 1773. It had just reached its completion in 1775, when it was destroyed by fire. The Revolutionary War coming on prevented any attempt to re-establish it until later years. Many of those still living will recall its sequestered court, and ivy-covered walls, into which one cast a restful glance while passing through the crowded streets of lower Broadway a few years ago. Its destruction to make way for the encroachment of business, and its removal to 15th Street are of comparatively recent date. The medical and anatomical instruction which was given in that old building, was the direct cause of an event, which, for a time, seriously interrupted that cordial good-feeling which, in a notable degree, has always existed between the medical profession and the laity, as the doctor usually calls the non-medical "rest of the world." The event referred to was the Doctors Riot, in 1788, the third great riot which had occurred in the history of New York, the first being the Negro Riot in 1712, and the second being the Stamp Act Riot in 1765. The following account is the more interesting, perhaps, as being contemporaneous:

314	The Doctor in Old New York
The Doctors Riot	<p>“ During the last winter, some students of physic, and other persons, had dug up from several of the cemeteries in this city, a number of dead bodies for dissection. This practice had been conducted in so indecent a manner, that it raised a considerable clamor among the people. The interments not only of strangers, and the blacks, had been disturbed, but the corpses of some respectable persons were removed. These circumstances most sensibly agitated the feelings of the friends of the deceased, and wrought up the passions of the populace to a ferment.</p> <p>“ On Sunday, the 13th inst., a number of boys, we are informed, who were playing in the rear of the Hospital, perceived a limb which was imprudently hung out of a window to dry ; they immediately informed some persons—a multitude soon collected—entered the Hospital ; and, in their fury destroyed a number of anatomical preparations ; some of which, we are told, were imported from foreign countries—one or two fresh subjects were also found—all of which were interred the same evening. Several young doctors narrowly escaped the fury of the people ; and would inevitably have suffered very seriously had not his Honor, the Mayor, the Sheriff, and some other persons interfered, and rescued them, by lodging them in gaol. The friends to good order, hoped that the affair would have ended here ; but they were unhappily mistaken.</p> <p>“ On Monday morning a number of people collected, and were determined to search the houses of the suspected physicians. His Excellency, the Governor, His Honor, the Chancellor, and His Worship, the Mayor, finding that the passions of the people were irritated, went among them, and endeavoured to dissuade them from committing unnecessary depredations. They addressed the people pathetically, and promised them every satisfaction which the laws of the country can give. This had considerable effect upon many ; who, after examining the houses of the suspected doctors returned to their homes. But, in the afternoon the affair assumed a different aspect. A mob, more</p>

fond of riot and confusion than a reliance upon the promises of the Magistrates, and obedience to the laws, went to the gaol, and demanded the doctors who were there imprisoned. The Magistrates finding that the mild language of persuasion was of no avail, were obliged to order out the militia, to suppress the riot, to maintain the government, and protect the gaol. A small party of about 18 armed men assembled at 3 o'clock, and marched thither—the mob permitted them to pass through with no other insult than a few volleys of stones, dirt, &c. Another party of about 12 men, about an hour afterwards made a similar attempt, but having no orders to resist, the mob surrounded them, seized and destroyed their arms. This gave the mobility fresh courage—they then endeavoured to force the gaol, but were repulsed by a handful of men, who bravely sustained an attack of several hours. They then destroyed the windows of that building with stones, and tore down part of the fence. At dusk another party of armed citizens marched to the relief of the gaol ; and as they approached it, the mob, huzzaring, began a heavy fire with stones, brick-bats, etc. ; several of this party were much hurt, and in their own defense were obliged to fire ; upon which three or four persons were killed, and a number wounded. The mob shortly after dispersed.

“On Tuesday morning the militia of General Malcom’s brigade, and Col. Bauman’s regiment of artillery were ordered out ; and a detachment from each were under arms during that day, and the subsequent night. But happily the mob did not again collect, and the peace of the city is once more restored.

“It must give pleasure to every good citizen to observe, by the charge of our worthy Chief Justice to the Grand Jury, that ‘our laws are competent to punish any degree of guilt.’ This being the fact, every friend to the State will patiently wait their operation ; and obedience to the laws, are their principal securities for the safe and quiet enjoyment of life, liberty and property. But, from mobs,

The  
Doctors  
Riot



316	The Doctor in Old New York
The Doctors Riot	<p>riots, and confusion, 'may the Good Lord deliver us.'" —<i>New York Packet</i>, Friday, April 25, 1788.</p> <p>Among the injured on the second day of the rioting were old Baron Steuben and John Jay, who were struck by missiles while attempting to pacify the rioters.</p> <p>We have reviewed briefly the practice and personality of the seventeenth-century and of the eighteenth-century doctor. The nineteenth-century doctor, with his various activities and acquirements, comes so closely within the memory and knowledge of the present generation that we refrain from entering upon any discussion of his many virtues. This we do mainly because it is not within the province of this paper ; but were it so, it would surely be a most pleasing task to record the marvellous changes which have taken place in the latter half of the nineteenth century, building so well upon the foundations which were laid by the many earnest workers of the eighteenth, and which have gone so far towards creating out of the old mass of ignorance and superstition a true science of medicine.</p>

The Doctor in Old New York	317
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